

A RARITY, SPHENOPHORUS SCHWARZII CHITTEN., REDISCOVERED (COLEOPTERA: CURCULIONIDAE)

By ROSE ELLA WARNER¹

A male beetle was collected by Dr. E. A. Schwarz on May 29, 1891 and was described by F. H. Chittenden as *Sphenophorus schwarzii* 30 years later (Proc. Ent. Soc. Washington 1924, 26(6):145, p. 5, fig. 1). Now, after 71 years, another specimen has been found.

The finding of the second specimen of this beetle has already made history in the newspaper *The Virginian-Pilot*, Norfolk, Virginia (Tuesday, July 17, 1962) under the following headline, "Curator turns up rare bug." Roger Rageot, Curator, Natural History Section, Norfolk Museum, Norfolk, Virginia, said he found the beetle June 3, 1962, on a cattail plant, at the edge of a duck blind off Knotts Island, Currituck Co., North Carolina. The plant was growing a few feet from the water in a place that would be submerged at high tide.

On June 25 Ashley B. Gurney of this Division visited Mr. Rageot in Norfolk, and the latter gave him some miscellaneous specimens for identification. The weevils were referred to me. Among the assortment was a *Sphenophorus* in perfect condition. It was quite different from the usual North American *Sphenophorus*, and I began to doubt the collector's locality. The specimen proved to be *schwarzii*.

The following account extracted from "Two Old Coleopterists" (D. H. Blake, Coleop. Bull., 1951, 5(4 & 5); and 1952, 6(1, 2 & 3) adds enthusiasm to this biological discovery:

"Dr. Schwarz, dean of Washington entomologists, would have nothing to do with the Doctor [Chittenden] and would not even name a beetle for him. . . . He [Chittenden] plainly regretted the loss of Dr. Schwarz' friendship. . . . A month earlier I [Mrs. Blake] said to Dr. Chittenden, 'We ought to do something for Dr. Schwarz on his birthday next month.' . . . The Doctor's next move was to write a paper in which he described a new species of *Sphenophorus* that he named *Sphenophorus schwarzi*, and, on Schwarz' birthday [80th], he sent me over to the Museum with the type specimen as well as the manuscript and a beautiful ink drawing of the beetle. . . . I handed him the box with the *Sphenophorus schwarzi* and he opened it eagerly. 'Oh I remember that thing, I remember it. I am glad to see it again, I am that.' He related how he himself had collected it at Fort Monroe, Virginia, at the flood of spring migrations, when things were washed up. He wondered if it was not a tropical species. He pored over the beetle, the manuscript, and the illustrations and said, 'That is a fine paper, a very fine paper.' " It was a festive birthday.

Vaurie (Bull. American Mus. Nat. Hist., 1951, 98:178) writes the following discussion of the weevil. "This beautiful and striking species, of which only the type is known in this country, is undoubtedly an im-

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portation, though from what part of the world is uncertain. A worn specimen of Dupont's (about 1840), with an unpublished manuscript name in his handwriting, was found in the collection of the British Museum with the label 'Ind or ?,' which might mean India, or even Indies, East or West. Except for the somewhat rubbed pronotum and the dirty condition of the white coating, this specimen agrees with the type of *schwarzii*."

Chittenden's discussion following the description of the species says, ". . . not closely related to any form but is allied to *aequalis*, because of the nature of the external coating and the tarsal structure, the brush of the extremely wide third tarsal joint being widely separated medially. It differs noticeably in the slender nearly straight rostrum, flat pronotum with declivous sides and strongly villous lower surface, and the strongly fimbriate legs. This beautiful species is so distinct from all the others of the genus known to the writer as nearly to warrant the erection of a new genus for its reception."

The finding of the second specimen, a female, has made me wonder if it is an immigrant, a tropical species washed in from the Indies during the high spring tides. Two specimens, though, are hardly enough to confirm the origin; therefore, additional collecting is being planned for the coming spring.

Sexual dimorphism is pronounced and exhibited as follows: MALE: Smaller and more slender. Length, 12 mm.; width, 4.5 mm.; length of rostrum, 3.6 mm. Pronotum, length, 4.6 mm.; width, 3.8 mm.; disc flat, opaque black, middle vitta a fine line extending from apex to base, lateral vitta black, raised, polished, of nearly uniform width, enclosing with side margin an elongate, flat, strongly declivous black area. Lower surface strongly villose, each puncture with a long yellow seta; first and second abdominal sterna concave, pygidium obtuse. FEMALE: Larger, not slender. Length, 17 mm.; width, 5.9 mm.; length of rostrum, 4.2 mm. Pronotum, length, 6.0 mm.; width 5.0 mm., disc flat, middle vitta wider, stronger, lateral vittae wider, raised, polished, the declivous space between lateral vitta and side margin narrower. Lower surface less villose, sterna convex, pygidium conical, 5th sternum longer.

The specimen from Knotts Island has been generously given to the U. S. National Museum.



BOOK NOTICE

THE CICINDELIDAE OF CANADA, by J. B. Wallis. University of Toronto Press, 74 pp., 4 colored plates, 1961, \$5.00—This little book is certainly a valuable guide to the tiger beetles of Canada and northern United States. The author has spent a lifetime studying these interesting beetles in the field and laboratory. Although this book is, and is meant to be, an elementary treatment of the family, there are many data included which are new to the literature. As such, it serves to extend our knowledge of the group as well as to provide a working tool. The author and the publishers both are to be congratulated for this effort, modestly priced. We can hope that further volumes of a similar nature will soon appear.